

Exploring Primary Teacher Education Students' Self-perception of Readiness to Teach Mathematics

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The tertiary education of Teacher Education Students (TES) is pivotal in their professional preparation and formation as qualified educators in specific learning areas, including mathematics. Graduate teachers will require an understanding of pedagogical content knowledge, and more specifically, the knowledge of ways to teach mathematical content in a way that assists student understanding (Shulman, 1987). However, there is currently a lack of understanding around the best ways to prepare teachers in the teaching of mathematics in initial teacher education programs (Thai & Hine, 2019). As argued by Norton and Allen (2020), there is a lack of research in TES readiness to teach primary school mathematics. Although there has been an attempt to address this lack of research in secondary TES' perceptions of readiness to teach mathematics (Hine & Thai, 2019), there continues to be a lack of research in TES' readiness to teach primary school mathematics.

This short communication will report on the preliminary findings of an investigation on TES' self-perception and readiness to teach primary mathematics. The aim of this research is to bring awareness to the areas within primary mathematics education that TES require further training in, and to help initial teacher education providers prepare TES to become confident and competent primary school mathematics teachers. Analysis of the pre-course questionnaire revealed that TES felt 'somewhat ready' to teach primary mathematics, although, they were considerably more positive in teaching content rather than pedagogy. In particular, TES indicated that they required further training in engaging and providing differentiated instruction for primary students in mathematics. The follow-up questionnaire, conducted after a semester long course on mathematical pedagogy showed that the majority of TES indicated they were more 'ready' to teach primary mathematics in terms of pedagogy and content.

Keywords: mathematics education, teacher education students, self-perception, readiness, initial teacher education.

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